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From: Renato Constantino, Jr.
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Date: November 9, 1993

Subject: The International Conference on East Timor

In response to your telephone request of yesterday evening, please find hereunder a brief description of the subject Conference. I trust that you will find everything in order and convey the same to the President. I look forward to our face-to-face meeting on the 11th of November to fill in any gaps that this brief memo may have left unanswered.

An international conference on East Timor is being planned for 1994. It will be the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region. The Conference is designed to introduce the issue of East Timor to the Asian-Pacific public and welcome the East Timorese to its regional community.

The idea for this Conference was initiated by the various advocacy and solidarity groups for East Timor particularly the Parliamentarians for East Timor led by the British Lord Avebury; the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor based in Leiden, The Netherlands; Tapol in London; Peace Talks Now in Australia; Asia Watch and East Timor Action Network in the United States; Free East Timor Coalition in Japan; Asian Council for the Progress of Peoples in Hongkong; Asian Cultural Forum for Development in Bangkok; LawAsia in the Philippines; and CPDM in Portugal among others.

...rt groups from Angola, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, ..., France, Germany, Hongkong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Macao, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nepal, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, and the United States have likewise endorsed the project. That is why the Conference will be carried out in conjunction with the annual meeting of East Timorese solidarity groups worldwide. The meeting will commence after the closing of the Conference.

The Conference will be held in the Philippines. It will be hosted by a Convenor's Group of various progressive and human rights groups. The group is composed of, among others, Bisig, Movement for Popular Democracy, Ateneo Human Rights Center, Confreedem and independent political personalities and NGOs. The Convenor's Group is chaired by Renato Constantino, Jr.

Approximately 200 participants are expected to attend this Conference. Most of the participants will come from the Asian-Pacific region, thus it being held in the Philippines. No other country in the region provides better logistics for an international gathering than the Philippines, what with its population conversant in English, the location being central in the region, a dynamic mass media and the democratic space the post-EDSA period engenders.

Those attending will be academics, lawyers, advocates as well as some political figures. The East Timorese participants will represent a wide spectrum of political tendencies. Representatives from the Indonesian and Portuguese governments will be invited.

International luminaries such as French First Lady Danielle Mitterand, Nobel Peace Awardee Rigoberta Menchu, the Dalai Lama, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Vanessa Redgrave, Sting, and other artists are expected to grace the Conference.

The Conference will be composed of presentations and workshops focusing on the legal basis of the East Timorese self-determination efforts and prospects for greater dialogue among the parties involved. Workshops will facilitate understanding of the issues. Throughout the Conference, there will be various cultural performances from the Philippines and possibly from East Timor.